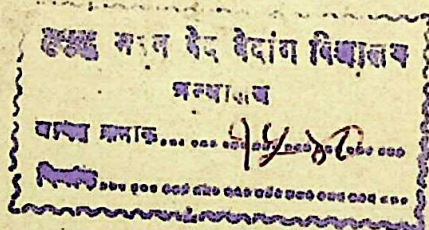


A PROFILE OF KALADY

(SANKARA'S BIRTH PLACE IN PICTURESQUE KERALA)



T. RAMALINGESWARA RAO.

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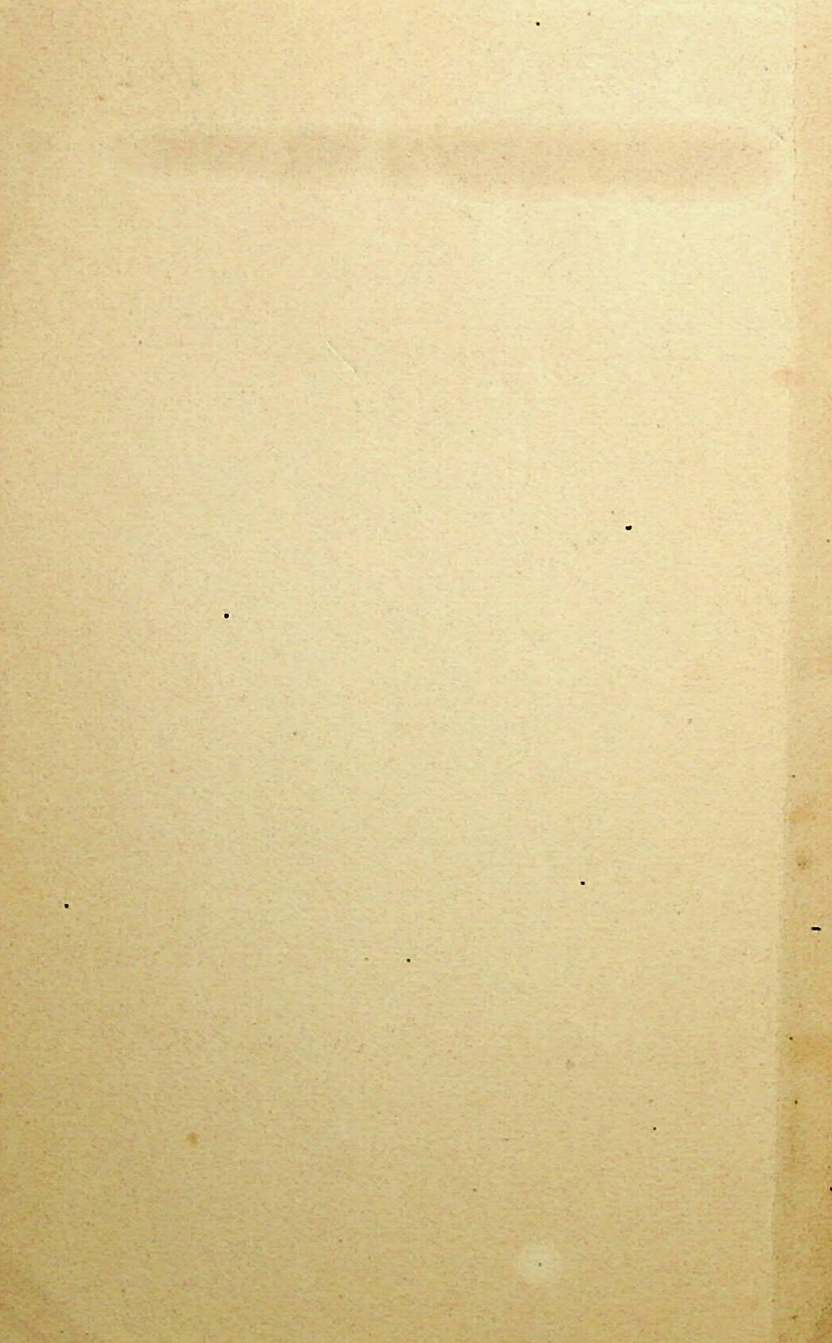
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A PROFILE OF KALADY

T. RAMALINGESWARA RAO



PUBLISHED BY

V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu & Sons

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MADRAS-1.

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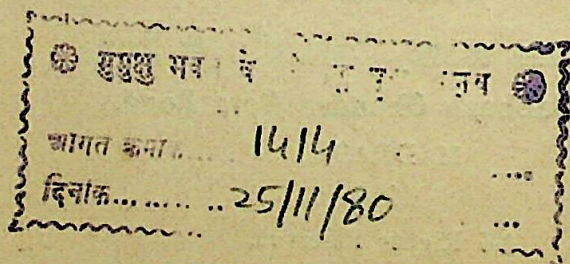
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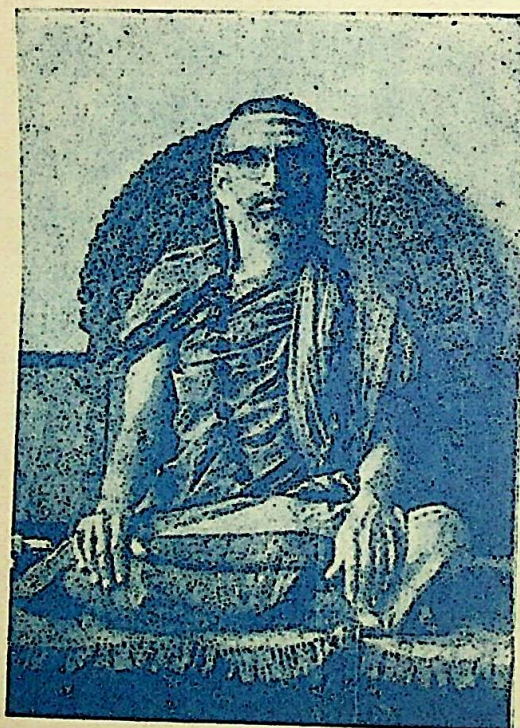
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SRI SANKARA BHAGAVATHIPADA



SRI JAGADGURU ABHINAVA VIDYATHIRTHA
MAHASWAMI

Most devotionally laid at the Holy lotus feet
of

HIS HOLINESS SRI JAGADGURU SANKARACHARYA
SRIMATH ABHINAVA VIDYATHIRTHA
MAHASWAMI

who radiates benevolence from
SRI SRINGERI SARADA PEETHAM
as Pontifex Maximus in an unbroken
line of apostolic succession from
SRI SANKARA BHAGAVATHPADA.

SRI SRINGERI JAGADGURU

MAHASAMSTHANAM

SARADA PEETHAM, SRINGERI

SRINGERI,

Date 29-6-1969.

MESSAGE

Kalady Symbolises a land mark in the history of Advaita Philosophy, its growth and its application. It is something like architectural eaves leading to the inner sanctum of Advaitic Spiritualism, to which, it also provides a sacred mantle.

Sri Ramalingeswara Rao-this gifted author-presented the past glory and the future hopes of Kalady in a charming way, which is sure to interest the historian, Scholar, spiritualist and the layman. The Publishers have done a praise worthy job in undertaking to publish it. His Holiness Mahasannidhanam Sri Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sringeri Sarada Peetham with Narayana Smaranams, blesses the author, the Publishers, and all others who read this book for prosperity, happiness and long life.

K. KRISHNA BHATTA.

(Private Secretary)

PREFACE

BY SHRI C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN

(Formerly Union Minister, Ministry of Law, Govt. of India)

In this brochure the author has given a pen picture of Kalady Village on the banks of Periyar river in Kerala. He has also striven to highlight the life and work of Adi Sankaracharya whose earthly manifestation was in that hamlet.

Kalady and the temple beautifully perched on the river were in a much neglected state in the early part of this century. It was near the ancient Capital of the Chera Kingdom.

It was my good fortune to be with my father when he received the great Pontiff Jagadguru Swami Chandrasekhara Bharati at the outskirts of the Village with Poorna Kumbha in 1939 when the saint visited Kalady after the Temple entry proclamation of Travancore. As pointed out by the author, it was during this period that the land around the temple and the birth place of the Adi Sankara were acquired and the temple and other buildings were repaired and renovated. A fairly well known Photograph of His Holiness entering Kalady accompanied by my father and many devotees has been published in many books on Kalady and Sringeri.

Kalady is now the centre of much industrial activity in Alwaye and other places around it. The modern trends however cannot dim the lustre of the sacred place. It is as important as it is elevating to Hindus, and to Advaithees in particular. It is also to be borne in mind that the curative properties of the water of the river

Periyar are well known. Kalady may well become a much frequented Spa in the days to come. Its primary importance however will be as a place of pilgrimage.

The author has done well in presenting the historical origins of the sacred place. No book on Kalady can escape detailed references to the Avathara Purusha Adi Sankara. Writing on Sankara, Dr. C. R. Ramaswami Aiyar says "Sankara trod a path which had been trodden by several preceding Philosophers and prophets, but his glory is characteristic and unique in that he effected a synthesis, a harmonious adaptation of various ideals and made it possible for people with differing equipments, with separate heredities, aptitudes and separate life histories to follow their own bent of mind, their own philosophy and at the same time to aspire beyond that individual philosophy into that supreme revelation in which the individual soul merges into the infinite and is not differentiated from it by interposed obstructions." (Biographical Vistas—Asia. Publisluing House).

The book has been dedicated to our Guruji, a great spiritual leader, His Holiness Jagadguru Sankaracharya swamigal of Sringeri, whose blessings are enough to make it popular and interesting. I commend this treatise as a useful compendium and a guide book of a sacred place.

The Grove,
Teynampet,
Madras-18
18-8-1969

C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

The glory of the past history of any part of India, or Kalady in particular, is a large theme, and a succinct short perspective profile is not easy. One may lose himself in mystical exaltation or in historical details.

I render thanks to my respected friend, (the well known historian) Sri K. R. Venkataraman, who has taken pains to go through the type Script to approve the historical details herein presented.

This being not poetry, fiction, philosophy, or mysticism, people acquainted with my old writings are likely to be surprised at this excursion into the domain of history. It is not the historical accuracy for which I have striven; (historical accuracy was however not ignored), but to create more interest in the mind of this generation about the historical, cultural and spiritual importance of Kalady, which has persisted despite the years that have passed.

I have written this book in response to the express wish of Sri Padmanabha Upadhyaya, the personal Secretary of His Holiness, Sri Jagadguru of Sringeri. I thank him for the suggestion.

I thank Sri C. R. Pattabhiraman for his kind preface.

I also thank Sri B. Y. Narayanayya, B. A., B. ED., Sole Trustee of Vavilla Venkateswara Sastrulu Trust for this publication.

Madras-33, }
25—8—69 }

T. RAMALINGESWARA RAO.

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A PROFILE OF KALADY



PART I

A WONDERLAND OF NATURE

It is perhaps the immortal mystic poet of Sind—who sang that 'Sacred is the earth of the saint'.

Sacred Kalady in Central Kerala, is the earth of Saint Sankara, the greatest thinker mankind has produced. As Dr. Radhakrishnan describes 'Sankara was not a dreaming idealist but a practical Visionary, a philosopher, and at the same time a man of action—what we may call a Social idealist on a grand scale. Even those who do not agree with his general attitude to life, will not be reluctant to allow him a place among the immortals. There has been few minds more universal than Sankara.' And Dr. Radhakrishnan can be believed because 'never in the history of philosophy has there been quite such a world figure' as stated by Prof. George P. Couger.

In the entire history of Indian Philosophical thought—or as a matter of that—universal philosophical thought—there is no other name greater than that of Sankara, the greatest giant among the intellectuals of the world, a prophet, a saviour and a mass awakener.

The brilliance of exposition, the judicious presentation, a rare combination of religion and philosophy,

reason and faith, intensity and breadth of out-look, imparted a rare vitality to his teachings. The consummate art of divine puissance and intuitive genius which Sankara displayed are phenomenal. The ceremonial purity and ethical excellence to which he gave a high value are not however equated with Enlightenment. Though he depended on logic and argument, he did not trust them. He did not value mere intellectual speculation. The religious experience which he believed is a Supra intellectual intuition. His was a many splendoured personality. More than a personality, he was an institution that became the source and centre of a new Philosophy, which is beyond the limitations of geographical or racial barriers and even the moral and humanist core of his teachings is above the carnal cult of nationalism. The life of Sankara was short but he is a giant among men measured by the greatness of his Soul. Sankara presented to this unbelieving world, all that is noblest in the Spirit of man. Human intellect received a new illumination by the eternal significance of his teaching which is the quintessence of the Upanishads. It is an honour to belong to the land of his birth.

He is an example for the truth of the saying of Euripides—"it is not wisdom only to be wise." His influence on the thinkers of the world is universal—and particularly great on Schopenhauer of Germany, Comte of France and Emerson of the United States. The saying of Kant 'I shall destroy reason to make room for

faith' is a borrowing from him. But he did not surrender reason. He attempted to satisfy it by faith. The realisation, he spoke of, is first hand to everybody, and there is no question of borrowing or second hand acquisition.

The Advaita doctrine of Sankara is non-dogmatic, and non-contingent on any other fact. Such is the universality of his message. A revolutionery saint who spiritualised all aspects of life, Sankara was a 'one man' force that kept the Vedic Religion in tact to this day.

Even to this day, in highly developed democratic countries attempts are still needed to wipe out glaring inequalities. But the doctrine of Sankara is a universal equality in the realm of spirit. The Political thinkers and the economists of the world have much to learn from his spiritual doctrine. If only the Political bosses and the economic theorists understand the doctrine of Sankara, and how best to apply it to their own respective fields of activity—it would be a lifting of the great heaviness that has been weighing upon the mankind, the begining of Peace and understanding; because the ideal of Sankara was to establish an order in which human beings will be free from iimitations in their progress in every department of spiritnal life.

Because culture ennobles Philosophy, while Philosophy sublimates culture, they are supposed to be mutually dependant. Then how about the background of the place that gave birth to Sankara !

Cradled between the green charms of the Western Ghats and the deep blue Arabian sea, Kerala is a fairy land of an unusual natural beauty. Its lagoons, backwaters, lakes, rivers, thick forests, ever-green hills and the handsome palm groves, plantations and the smiling plantain gardens - create an atmosphere of Peace and make an ideal back-ground for its immortal contribution to religion, philosophy, literature, art and culture. Forests are one of the most striking features of the landscape and even in prehistoric era, man lived in forests which provided for all the needs of man. Even from the Vedic and Upanishadic times, forests were the seats of learning and the most part of Indian Spiritual thought emanated from the forests. "Verily those who live in the forest, leading a life of austerity and devout worship—Peaceful, wise and keeping the mendicant's rule—these men, Purged of all impurities, go by the solar gate to where the Immortal Being dwells"—so says Mundakopanishad. As back as from Emperor Asoka's time—there are inscriptions to show that Forests were recognised as a national heritage and care was taken for the preservation and protection of the forests. The ever-green and the deciduous forests of Kerala remained in tact through the ages.

Heavy Moonsoon rains and the tropical Sunshine with which Kerala is blessed—make the land a homestead of unending ever - green spring—fragrant with jack fruit, mango, banana and pepper vines. Like the unending spring—Kerala the home of the Spices—is a land of unbroken Verdure—never ending Villages—a

continuous stretch of self contained independent homesteads—garden houses. One family Villa after another—with all necessary amenities provided inside the boundaries. The land is covered always by the shade of innumerable trees and not even a span width is left uncultivated.

The clumps of cocoanuts and the exuberant greenery, present a most delightful sight. The gentle contoured mountain ranges have green covered round tops with tea, rubber, coffee, pepper, teak and Cardamom plantations on the slopes. Innumerable mountain streams run from the mountain ranges to the Sea across the midland of slopes, Valleys, and clustering hills. The canals, lagoons, and the back waters of the coastal belt present a scene of Splendour, with the luxuriant cocoanut groves and a few open rice fields.

With the background of its natural beauty, a landscape of green music and flowing poetry, Kerala made a significant Contribution to literature, music, dance, Painting, Sculpture architecture, religion, philosophy and culture. Though the architecture of Kerala is not massive, there is no lack of variety (sloping roofs and excessive use of timber). It is a class by itself—even without Starry Pyramids. Architecture is an art of the spectacular mass while Sculpture is an art of qualitative dimensions. Both are varied and extensive. The artistic fancy of Kerala is suggestively impressive and is like a living dream—compatible with the natural scene of the landscape—a new fairy land on earth.

Malayalam, the language of Kerala has a sizable content of Sanskrit—which made the language very rich in Vocabulary—extensive and at the same time very deep in the power of expression. Malayalam also became flexible and flowing along with the growing needs of the passing times.

This apart, Kerala has its own long, ancient and still living tradition of keeping up Sanskrit learning in all its several branches, making a great contribution to the basic cultural unity of India.

Kerala is in many respects the home of classical dance. The earliest method of staging Sanskrit drama, “Kudiyattam”—is still preserved in Kerala—as the Nature is preserved in its purity even to this day,

The salvation of Kerala has been the beauty of its landscape. Even in this age of industrial growth, when the suburbs spread out quickly from towns, some hill, or a back water lake makes a timely intervention because no ingenuity can move a mountain or fill up the sea. The Keralites have retained their traditional love of Nature. They do not cut down forests or desecrate the hills, because reverence to Nature remains deep in the soul of a Keralite. They are a clean people—rich or poor. Aesthetics is a part of life and it is a form of Politeness. India’s most densely populated, most literate and a most forward political thinking part, still finds time for the leisurely graces of the legendary orient. In spite of thick and dense forests, high attitudes, back

water lakes, many rapid rivers and streams, the density of Population of Kerala is the highest in India. Perhaps numerous as the leaves on the trees.

The man of Kerala has a solemn face but the woman is always smiling. But both are deeply traditional. The normal dress of the man or the woman is not westernised nor modern. Perhaps tradition and modernism sit side by side in an attempt to win over each other with tolerance.

The splendour of the scenic landscape, a shrine of nature—a virtual wonderland, the blue azure of the nearby sea, the neat garden houses coming one after the other—create a hypnotic effect.

Winding its way among countless back water, lakes, and embedded in mountains, the Kerala High Way from the South to the North extends along the coast. The high plain that interposed itself marked one end of the lagoons which are navigable in high or low tide. Perhaps the early days of history saw forts created at different points that commanded the facilities of the route, which were taken and retaken, razed and rebuilt as Victory alighted on hostile banners.

When it rains (the rainfall is heavy in pluvius Verala) it looks like a Painting on silk—with lagoons—bridges—streams—cocoanuts and cloudy mountains.

The graceful towns, national parks, wooded hills, temples, and garden houses looking with a busy unconcern for the growing world around, the spreading but orderly and cheked industrial sprawl—have kept the charm of a more leisurely and aesthetic bygone age.



PART II

(A PEEP INTO THE PAST)

Parasurama with the battle axe is the legendary founder of Kerala. The legend says that when he was besieged by the young widows of the Warriors he killed—for providing them a shelter—he created a new land for them by placing his battle axe in the sea along the South Western mountain Ranges. This background of the legend fits with the matriarchial social base that developed.

The Inscriptions of Emperor Asoka (3rd century B. C.) made a direct reference to the Kerala Country.

Ancient Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Arabs took cargo of Sandal-wood, Spices, Pepper, ivory and other Indian rareties like cloth from the old Cranganore of Kerala—the Indian Trade Emporium of those days (primum emporium Indian—as described by 'Pliny' the great historian.

Cranganore, now a small town—was in olden times the capital City of United Kerala.—Chera country as it was called in those days. This town of Cranganore was then called Muziris. Pliny, the great historian of the first century A. D. mentioned about it. According to Pliny, it was the capital City of Cheraman Perumal—the emperor of Chera country or modern Kerala. In the Periplus (also of the first century A. D.) there was also a mention of this town. According to it, Ships from

Greece, and Arabia came to the river Periyar. ('Periplus Maris Erythroel' is a very oncient treatise of geography).

The Royal Palace of Cheraman Perumal the emperor —(allal Perumkovilakkam) was on Cheraman Perumbu— (the place of the Royal Palace) now near the ancient temple of Tiruvanchikulam.

The walls of the City of Carthage were built by Sandalwood taken from the Port of Cranganore by the ancient Phonecians. The Vattezhuth characters of the Malayalam language (and also of Tamil) bear enough testimony to the contact which Phonecians of old maintained with this part of India in those times.

This town of Cranganore—now a little township of historical imortaace—still stands at the mouths of the River Periya. Very many foreign travellers of old have left accounts of Cranganore of their times. It was in those days variously called—Muziris, Muchiri, Muchini, Jangli, Jangaleh, Jin Kaji Cunglin, Shinkali, Chinkali, Columgria, Chrongalur, Godugalur, and several other similar names.

The united Kerala—or Chera Country of those days —was ruled by Kings elected by a process of democracy for a period of 12 years. The United Kerala—the Chera Country—extended beyond the limits of modern Kerala. Legend has it that the Chera country extended far north and upto Cape Comorin—Kanyakumari in the South. It bordered ancient Chola and Pandya Kingdoms of the Tamil country. The whole Chera Country participated

in the democratic election of the Perumal—the King of Chera for 12 years.

The King was called Perumal—a monarch by Constitutional right. The real power was exercised by the Council formed by Talis or divisions into which the country was divided.

Chieftains appointed by the King were in charge of the different regions of the Country. The Bhagavati Temple of Cranganore is stated to be the oldest temple in the Chera Country. King Chenguttava Perumal (69—125 A. D.) is said to be the builder of this temple. There is a traditional story connected with the construction of this temple. This temple is supposed to commemorate the tragic heroin 'Kannaki' of ancient Tamilnad.

Kovalan was a rich man residing in Choia Country during the reign of King Illanchal Chenni. But he lost his riches on account of his association with a dancer Madhavi of Kaveri Poompattinam. With his wife Kannaki, Kovalan migrated to the Pandya Country which had Madurai as its Capital.

When Kovalan arrived in the Pandyan Kingdom in search of better days, he faced a charge of having committed the crime of stealing the anklets intended for the Pandyan queen. Kovalan was hanged for the crime by the Pandya King. When Kannaki, the wife of Kovalan heard the news, she became furious. She ran

to the Court of the Pandian King, proved the innocence of her husband and charged the Pandyan King of unrighteousness. She cut one of her breasts, threw it into the chamber of the Pandyan King and cursed him.

Later Kannaki ascended the funeral Pyre of her husband and joined him. The story of Kannaki was reported to Chenguttava Perumal, the King of Chera—by a Chieftain who witnessed the Sati of Kannaki—on his way to the Chera Capital.

The Chera King was moved on hearing the Kannaki tragedy. He requested his younger brother Ilankov Atikal (Royal Monk) to write a book to commemorate the tragic story of the unfortunate woman. Ilankov Atikal—brother of the King—renounced the world and was staying at Kannavayil—a few miles from Cranganore. This book became a famous Tamil Classic 'Silappadikaram' one of the five great epics of ancient Tamil. The classic contains Puhar, Madurai and Vanahi Kandams. The Pathikam at the commencement and the close bear a very close resemblance to Valmiki Ramayana. The similarity is very obvious in the first four Sargas and the Uthara Kanda. The similarity bears testimony to the love of Sanskrit of Ilango, the author of the Tamil classic. The twin classic with it—'Manimekalai' was written by Sattanar—a friend of Chenguttava Perumal, the King of Chera Country. This classic deals with the story of the daughter of Kovalan by Madhavi.

The Chera Queen who heard the story of the unfortunate Kannaki, was moved beyond limits. She

requested her husband Chenguttava Perumal, the King of Chera to build a temple to commemorate the tragic story of the unfortunate Woman Kannaki.

The Capital City of Chera was on the River Periyar—the longest of the Kerala Rivers. The other long river is the Bharat Puzha river. The River Periyar was called River Choorni in the Puranic times. This is a figurative description of the river with the forlocks—that is the river with the flanking Cocoanut Palms which dance like the forlocks of a maiden when the wind blows. In latter days, the River became the river Poorna—another description of its fulness—in other words the fullest river of the country.

The ancient Tamil Poets sang about this River as Periyar, the big river. Thayankannanar—a very ancient Tamil poet—gave a fine description of the Ships that came on the River Periyar. “The beautiful large ships of Yavanas bring Gold, come splashing the white foam on the waters of the Periyar—the river of Chera Country”.

There are other ancient Tamil Poets who also sang the praise of the River Periyar, the Town Muzirli, its Port and the Chera King.

It is difficult now to visualise the shape of Malayalam language of those days—because Tamil and Malayalam have claimed to be the source of each other. The verbs in Malayalam have no changes due to number and gender. The change is due only on account of the tense.

The early inscriptions in Chera Country are full of Tamil. The earliest book in Malayalam now available is "Ramacharitam". The author of this work is Rama Varma Maharaja who assumed the title Mani Kanta. He is supposed to be a King of Kerala.

The highest social position in Kerala is occupied by Nambuthiri Brahmins—distinct class of Brahmins of the Vedic times. Nambuthiris appear to have come down from the Narmada Valley. Several explanations are given for their name. They are dependable for zealously keeping up the Vedic tradition. This dependability is signified by the name.

The contribution and devotion of Nambuthiris to Religion, learning and Art are of a high order. Even to this day, they are responsible for keeping Sanskrit learning as a great tradition in flesh and blood in Kerala.

The devotion of Nambuthiris to Sanskrit is so great that even with the Women folk of the house-hold, they were conversing in that language. In course of time, this talk with the ladies became a mixed language of Sanskrit and Malayalam—a garland of Mani and Pravala (Precious stone and Pearl). This Manipravala Style ruled the literary realm of Malayalam for a pretty long time.

This love of Sanskrit made the Malayalee and Malayalam very healthy and loveable. The Malayalee does not indulge in praising his own language endlessly; never spouting a few general sentiments for easy accep-

tance; for instance the antiquity of his language, its uniqueness, and its independence of all others on earth, The Malayalee is happy to share the basic unity of Indian thought, Indian Culture, and Indian way of life.



PART III

BORN OF LIGHT.

It was Sankara Ravi Varman, (who was perhaps the last of the Perumals), that was ruling the Chera Country in the eighties of 8th century with his capital at Cranganore. It was called Mahadevapattanam or Makattaipattanam at that time. It became subsequently Kodungallor (a contraction for Kodilingapura) and the Portuguese made it Cranganore.

Sankara Ravi Varma, who was perhaps the last of the Perumals, granted certain privileges to the Jews that came earlier to India to settle. The Jews colonised during the times of Solomon. The Jewish colony exists even to-day unmolested by the two millenia that passed. Their colony at Chennamangalam (and Parur) is a suburb of Cranganore at the present day.

During the times of Sankara Ravi Varma, the Chera Country was still peaceful. Vedic learning and Vedic tradition still remained pure and religious toleration observed to a highest degree.

Kalady (Kalati as locally called) was a prosperous village near Periyar River of those days. Sivaguru, son of Vidhydhiraja was a happy Nambuthiri house-holder. His wife was Aryamba—a daughter of Melpalur mana, another Nambuthiri family (Bharadhwaja Gotra) of distinction. They were a devoted couple—and an ideal man and wife. The man was deeply learned, highly

pious, and infallible in his duties as a Brahmin house holder. The woman was his equal in all respects. They lived a happy life and theirs was an example for emulation to everybody.

Sivaguru and Aryamba were finding life fruitless because they were not blessed with children. They observed several Vratas, sought the blessings of the pious and the learned, and prayed before the Gods of the local Shrines.

Days rolled by and the couple did not realise their wish. Elders advised them to do penance in the temple of Vedakkunahar or Vrishabhachaleswara—in Tirushivaperur (modern Trichur), which is about twenty miles from their home in Kalady.

This temple complex—which is perhaps one of the oldest of Kerala—is still standing inspiring on the apex of a rising ground in the Centre of Trichur Town. This temple has a thick walled court-yard with an entrance on each side. The main shrine of the complex is that of Siva with Ambal on the rear side. The other shrines in the complex are dedicated to Sri Rama, Harihara, Ganapati and Ayyappa.

The Abhisheka to Sivalinga of this temple is only with Ghee. (Ghrita—one of the Panch Amritas). The moment ghee is poured over it—it gets solidified—and only a portion of it flows down. The Linga is covered with high coats of Solid Ghee—almost man size. It now looks like a Pillar of Ghee—a replica of the linga of

Snow—the Amarnath Himalinga of Kashmir. The Ghee smells sweet and surprisingly there are no ants in the temple compound. Legend has it that nobody has ever seen the naked Linga without the Ghee coating. The Pillar of Ghee—or Ghrita Linga shines with a resplendent glory in the Vick light of the Sanctum Sanctorum. The yellowish white column looks like the benevolent manifestation of the 'Teja' of Mahadeva—in the semi-dark Sanctum Sanctorum fragrant with the sweet smell of the Solid Ghee.

In those days of old, the childless Nambuthiri couple of Kalady, Aryamba and Sivaguru, travelled to Tirusivapurur to pray to Mahadeva for a child. They reached the temple for a Maha Sivaratri festival and stayed on to pray and to do penance.

Months rolled on when one night Sivaguru had a dream in which Mahadeva appeared and encouraged him to ask for a boon, Sivaguru asked for a son. Mahadeva granted the boon and said that the boy will be omniscient, his fame living as long as the stars, and the Sun-shine—but that he would depart after a short life of fulfilment.

Aryamba almost at the same time had an auspicious dream. A ray of light from the Ghrita Linga of Tirusivaperur—saffron pearl in colour, shining splendidly, shot through the void and entered her womb. Awakened with the dream she found herself in the arms of her husband with a new bliss in her breast while a wind blew with unknown freshness over the land and the sea.

The couple had realised that Mahadeva granted them the boon, that a holy child, of wondrous wisdom will soon be theirs after Aryamba fulfills the days of bearing. They returned home with hearts of gratitude.

The village of Kalady wore a new look. The trees wore crowns of glossy leaves and fragrant blooms. The trees in the home-yard bent together to make a bower above Aryamba. There were a thousand new flowers of Spring.

It was a Vaisakha Sukla Panchami day in the Solar Mesha Month. The Jupiter and the Moon were in conjunction in the crab. Saturn was in Libra and Mars was in Capricorn. It was noon when the ascendent Lagna was cancer. Without a pain or a Pang Aryamba brought forth her son—a child divinely perfect in form.

The joy of the parents knew no bounds. They called him Sankara—who spreads benevolence of grace and happiness.

The couple, their relations, their community and the entire village folk rejoiced as the divine child grew up. The child became the centre of attraction and their house, the illom, dear to all men for this great child. When the boy Saṅkara became three years old, his father Sivaguru became sick. Father of the fountain of wisdom, dear to all Gods and men, Sivaguru became too sacred for more woe. After fondling the divine child one night, he slept smilingly and got up no more. It was a painless end of life painful.

On hearing the death of Sivaguru, the Kinsfolk of Aryamba from Melpalur Mana came to her assistance. She agreed to spend some years in her paternal illom and went with them.

The maternal relations of Sankara performed his Upanayanam when he was five years old.

After the Upanayanam of her son, Aryamba returned to live at Kalady, with Sankara who was just a boy of five. One day he saw his mother was unwell. Aryamba was daily visiting nearby Manikkamangalam Temple of Katyayani Bhagavati to offer milk. As she was unwell she sent Sankara to the temple, to make the offering. By the time Sankara reached the temple, the temple was found closed, Sankara felt bitterly disappointed and cried aloud. Suddenly a bright luminous vision came out of the temple Sanctum Sanctorum and emptied the cup of milk. But Sankara cried again because nothing was left in the cup as Prasada. A Divine figure of Light in the shape of a lady appeared before him and filled half the cup to console him. Sankara felt happy and ran to his mother with joy. This Katyayani Bhagavati temple has stood the test of time upto this day.

Sankara soon joined a Gurukula to pursue traditional studies. He was living on food gathered by Madhukara Vritti.

One day he went along to a nearby illom where a cousin of his mother lived. He reached the threshold of the house which was perfectly clean and made a

traditional request for alms in a high toned voice. Nobody answered the call and none came out. Sankara repeated the traditional request "Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi", a second time. There was a low reply from inside. The lady of the house explained to Sankara that they were in a curse of abject poverty, nothing to offer to the divine Brahmachari seeking alms,—that she could not even come out to see him because the only cloth available in the house was taken by her husband who had gone out to seek alms himself. Sankara explained to her that he was but a child of five and that she could come out to see him and persuaded her to give him whatever was available in the house. There was a ripe amalaka fruit available in the house which she gave to Sankara with absolute sense of sincerity. Sankara was moved with pity and he prayed to Lakshmi with Kanaka Dhara Stotra. Lakshmi answered his Prayers with a shower of gold amalaka fruit in the fore yard of the lady. The house earned the name of Suvarnattumanaikkal or Suvarnattumana—still one of the richest in Kerala.

Sankara soon became proficient in traditional learning, all branches of Veda and all Sastras. It was as though he went to the Gurukula only to show that he knew all even before he went there.

Sankara returned home as a full fledged Scholar from the Gurukula at the early age of six or seven. He was attending to the comforts of his aged mother.

One day it was very cloudy, raining incessantly and the earth was slushy. His mother Aryamba found it difficult to go to the River Periyar—a mile and a half away—for daily ablutions. She had no mind to forego the daily River bath to which she has been accustomed. Sankara understood her difficulty. He closed his eyes and thought about it for a minute. The mighty River cut its way near to the house of Sankara. His mother Aryamba saw the coming of the River—as if Bhagirathi had come down to the earth due to the Penance of Rajrishi Bhagiratha. Her joy was over-whelming. But she found the nearby temple of Balakrishna submerged in the waters of the new course of the River. Sri Krishna was her favourite deity. Sankara understood her mind. He constructed a new temple on the high bank of the new River for Sri Krishna and installed the Murti which he resurrected from the sub-merged temple.

The silted old course of the River and the Sankara installed Sri Krishna temple still attract the people to this day.

Sankara was attending on his aged mother and was running a Gurukula of his own to which many students gathered for knowledge. Udaya Martanda Varma who subsequently became a chieftain of Kollam (Quilon) was one of Sankara's pupils of those days. Another disciple was Bhaskara Ravi Varma a local Chief with the surname of Rajasekhara. He assumed the pen name of Śaktibhāṣan and wrote three Sanskrit dramas, Ascharya

Choodamani, Unmada Vasavadatta and another, now lost.

The legend says that when the manuscript of Ascharya Choodamani was accidentally lost in a fire, Sankara saved the book by reciting it from memory as he had heard it earlier from his pupil.

When he was eight years old Sankara was already known for his Scholarship and Saintliness. Nambuthiri's his community people from (Crangnore) Kodungalur sought his help when they could not bear the wrath of the Bhagavathi of the local Temple where worship in Vogue was Vamachara at that time. Sankara visited Kodungalur temple and with his spiritual powers reduced the aggressiveness of the Bhagavathi and made her a 'Soumyamoorti.' He effected considerable changes in the mode of worship in the temple. It is believed that the new yantra installed by him to invest the Bhagavati with benevolent and graceful looks—is still in worship in the closed room abutting the sanctum.

Returning from Kodungalur, Sankara felt an urge for renunciation. One morning when he went to the River for the morning ablutions along with his mother, he found himself caught by an alligator. He thought that escape would not be possible. Immediately he uttered "PRESHA" renouncing the world. 'Apat' Sanyasa—and surprisingly the alligator disappeared. He explained the position to his mother and sought her permission to leave the house to embrace Sanyasa by regular process. Aryamba had no other course except to consent.

Sankara requested his kinsmen to take care of his mother. The Salagramams and other idols in worship in the house, were given by Sankara to his maternal relatives. He also consoled his mother that he would be with her whenever she wished to see him.

After Sankara left his mother, she was very unhappy. She could not go to Tirusivaperur for the annual Mahasivarathri festival in the Mahadeva temple. She was old, infirm, and sick and full of grief. She was unhappy because she could not make the annual pilgrimage as usual and she slept confusedly praying to Mahadeva expressing her helplessness.

She had a dream in which the Mahadeva of Tirusivaperur appeared before her and informed that he would be manifesting as a Linga on the top of a nearby hillock where she would be led by a white deer next morning. On the deer she would find him dancing.

The next morning, Aryamba saw the deer which led her to a nearby high ground where she found the Linga. A temple complex like that of the Tirusivaperur temple soon developed.

This temple still stands within two miles of Kalady. It is now under the management of Tekkini odattumana Nambuthiris. This temple is known as Vallimantulli Temple about two miles from Kalady on its western outskirts.

The history of Kalady reveals the story of an eternal world in which the name of Sankara shone with a beauty like that of Gita in the Mahabharata.

The fragrance of the flower is not buried under the piling of time, and there is no decline of excellence. It goes on mounting into a climaxing brilliance.

For a man who has a sixth sense—even for a reverent agnostic—the history of Kalady is a positive proof of the mystery of life and the mystery of the universe.

While venturing into a pattern of appreciating the halo of Kalady—one has to go deeper than the Semantics, the idiom, and the background.

It is a part of our duty to bestow on our heritage a tithe of loving concern. By such concern, we help ourselves, our faith in ourselves as the inheritors of a great tradition built by Sankara.

Sankara perhaps believed in the curative function of literary art, and its ability to elevate the mind to a spiritual experience. Perhaps for this reason, Sankara indulged in poetic expression of his thoughts. And his poetry is full of mysticism. In whatever he wrote, philosophy, practice, religion mystic ecstasy and art always mixed together. Sankara offered truth in its wholeness bringing all facts and ideas into the sphere of thought.

Dr. Radhakrishnan writes "one sees Sankara in youth, on fire with intellectual ambition, a stiff and intrepid debator; another regards him as a shrewd

political genius, attempting to impress on the people a sense of unity; for a third, he is a calm philosopher engaged in the single effort to expose the contradictions of life and thought with an unmatched incisiveness; for a fourth, he is the mystic who declares that we are all greater than we know."



PART IV

THE HALO DIMS

Sankara went out into the world, found his Guru, rejuvenated the Vedic religion and spread his empire of Advaita far and wide. The country realised that Sankara was a Divinely gifted soul manifested in humanity. He toured the entire Bharat Varsha and proved the basic unity of the country as a reality. It was a classical revelation of an extraordinary life of grace, ecstasy and achievement. He became the Master of all that is represented by 'Sanatana Dharma' and Lord of a new blaze. The beautiful cadence in the flawless sentences which he spoke caught the imagination of the learned and the unlearned. He brought about a great reform without mob turbulence.

He spent twelve years at Sringeri—the primary seat of his spiritual empire teaching his disciples. Suddenly one day, he heard a distant call—as if it came from the innermost regions of his mind. It was as though the feeble voice of his mother calling him to her side. The serene, heroic, saintly and gentle sage was moved by the thoughts of his mother. It was a personal feeling of the irresistibility of filial bonds of love.

Sankara rushed to Kalady to see his mother whom he found lingering before death. It was as though she was waiting for a last glimpse of her son. Sankara consoled his mother, explained her the essence of Vedanta.

—and how Paratatwa is but Harihara Swarupa. He sang the praise of Siva and Vishnu in Bhujanga stotras to the pleasure of his dying mother whose soul he sent to the abode of peace, bliss and light from which there was no return.

He sent for all the Local Nambuthiri families to help him perform the obsequies of his mother.

When the old lady died, nobody came from eight of the ten Nambuthiri houses. But the other two houses were represented by each by an individual. One of them stood near the head of the departed lady and the other near the feet. But even those that came did not co-operate with Sankara to cremate the dead body of his mother. He had to invent his own device.

He borrowed a knife from a neighbour, chanted vedic hymns into the ear of the dead body, cut the dead body into pieces, put them on dry leaves and banana barks gathered in the compound and set the pyre ablaze by sprinkling of water from the Kamandalu. The fire consumed the body in no time. Sankara was displeased with the behaviour of the Nambuthiris of the place. It worked like a curse.

The legend says that Sankara promised the lifting of the curse by the 33rd person in his Pontific succession which would be only after a thousand years and more.

The curse given by Sankara worked in the total disappearance of Nambuthiri Illams that kept aloof.

The two illoms that sent representatives to console him remained to this day. The Illom of the person who stood at the head of the dead body came to be called Talangattupillai Illam and the other Kappilli Illam whose representative stood near the feet of the dead body. The house that lent the knife came to be called as Ambattu Vidu.

The method followed by Sankara in the cremation of the dead body of his mother remained as a practice among the Nambuthiris to this day. They still continue to cremate the dead bodies in their own compounds, chant vedic mantras in the ears of the dead body—and dismember the dead body into pieces before placing it on the funeral pyre. They also use banana barks and leaves for the funeral Pyre.

The Kappilli Illam is the nearest to Sankara on his Paternal side of successiou.

The place where the body of Aryamba was consumed by fire acquired sanctity through the ages. This spot on the River Bank was being visited by all those that went to the River or to the nearby Srikrishna temple. The visitors would light a lamp to pay homage to the memory of Aryamba, the mother of Sankara and take a few particles of earth from the spot as holy dust—Prasada.

After the cremation of the body of Aryamba, Sankara left Kalady. He once again went to the North spreading the message of Advaita wherever he went.

Finally he went to Kedaranath on the snow clad Himalayas and entered a cave from which he never came out. There is a memorial mandiram near the cave which is called "The Kaivalya Dhama."

The News of the disappearance of Sankara reached his home country by slow paces. His friend and Cheila Udaya Martanda Varma was then ruling the area round Kollam. When the news reached him, Udaya Martanda Varma wept like a child. His grief was uncontrollable. He convened a Conference of all the learned scholars of Kerala and placed before them the news of the disappearance of the great Master. The assembled Scholars paid their tributes to the great master. They desired to commemorate his memory and achievement—not a birth or death memorial or anniversary as that would be too prosaic for the greatest intellectual of Mankind. Any such memorial may yield to the reavages of time. They thought of a memorial that stands with time—at the same time not susceptible to its havoc. They have started a new era of time—counted from the day of the assemblage at Kollam. This Sankara memorial era came to be called after the place of the assemblage Kollam. It is now the Kollam era which is followed throughout Kerala and in the neighbouring districts of Tamilnad. The Kollam era became the national era of Malayalam just as Sankara is their national hero. (The year 1145 of the Kollam era commences in 1969).

Kerala—a homogeneous scene of natural beauty and a dynamic seat of traditions in Vedic learning, dance,

music, art and architecture—made this greatest act of commemorating its greatest man by dedicating Time to his memory which will stand perched on the wings of time in its flight to the endless times.

Besides the four well known Sanyasa disciples, Suresvara, Padmapada, Hastamalaka and Totaka (who become the heads of Sringeri Dwaraka, Puri and Badrika maths established by him) Sankara had several other disciples including house-holders from all communities. Some of such disciples started three maths in Kerala,—the Tekkamatham, the Vadakka matam, and the Naduvil-matam—all at Trichur. These three maths developed into eighteen such maths in Kerala of later times.

Sarvajnatman (who lived in the times of Manukula Aditya the chief of Travancore in 10th century) wrote the celebrated Sankshepa Sarirakam—and he was a disciple of Devesvara, a pupil of Devanada who is a disciple of Sreshtananda—belonging to one of these three maths.

It is believed that apart from the four Peethadhipati Sishyas of Sankara, there were eighteen other sishyas who served the master with great devotion.

After the disappearance of the Master, the memory of the place of his birth became dim and fell into historical oblivion.

The generations that followed him cherished his memory, propagated his doctrine, and spared no efforts to keep his tradition living. They did their best to show

that enlightenment like grace is not something to be attained, achieved or possessed but that it is what one is. It is a matter of maturity—a condition of self awareness at the same time free of ego consciousness, that is a kind of continuing inner experience.

Nobody attempted to think of the halo of the place of the birth of the Master. It was perhaps because during his life time—he stepped over all hills and dales, journeyed through all forests and fields, and visited all holy places in the Bharat Varsha thereby creating a new halo of sanctity to every spot he stepped over. In the overwhelming memories of his great victories and the stories connected with his visits to almost every sacred place in the country, the Speciality of the Place of his birth lost its importance. And over a thousand and more years rolled by.



PART V

UNEMBOWERED

Sankara became a national character and his doctrine an integral part of Indian thinking. In fact his philosophy became the base and climax for all thinking and a significant aspect of National character. If a nation loses its national character, it loses everything. So Sankara or his doctrine which form the base of Indian national character can never be lost. National character is perhaps not a static conception. But in spite of its dynamic nature, all higher values inherited from the past will remain consciously preserved.

Historically, the 19th century occupies a notable position. A new India emerged from the ruins of the Mughal empire and the troublesome period that succeeded. Decay, despair, depression and disintegration that threatened the country disappeared and a new era of great possibilities ushered in.

As time rolled on, the thoughts of Sankara spread all over the world—and all thinkers (wherever they may be) respect the immortality of the doctrine of Sankara.

If a nation suddenly re-discovers the halo of the place of birth of a great saint—a place, which suffered a period of comparative neglect—nothing in the way of expatiation or exposition needs to be added. It is part of the activity of the mind which is lifted to the contemplation of divine things.

A people who excavated the Kailasa temple, built the Tajmahal, explored the remotest meoldies in the field of music, and reached the heights and depths in the realm of thought, are not incapable of a sense of history or its perspective. During the second half of the Nineteenth century—there was a great class of Western Orientalists who loved India, its culture, and its Philosophy. Their appreciation of the Philosophy of Sankara stimulated with the great efforts of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Rama Thirtha—grew immense with the passing years. Sankara came to be acknowledged as the greatest of the thinkers even by the westerners unhesitatingly.

Those were the days of Sri Jagadguru Satchidananda Sivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Mahaswamy, 33rd in the line of succession from Sankara on the Sringeri Sarada Peetha.

“His Holiness was a man of the highest character, a magnetic personality, a fine sanskrit scholar, and a perfect master of the intricacies of the Vedanta Philosophy” as written by Charles Johnston. Fraser, the English tutor of the Mysore Princes—expressed that his conversation with His Holiness has lifted his soul above the turmoil of life.

Many persons among his disciples became Sidha Purushas—and several miracles are attributed to his great Psychic Powers which came to him unwantedly but intensely. A son of a Sanskrit Scholar of a place

near Nagercoil was cured of his dumbness by the Acharya. This incident is covered by a sanskrit work of the Poet. None of those who came to the Acharya went without satisfaction.

This Acharya became a Sanyasi (in 1866) when he has but eight years old. He served the feet of his Guru Sri Jagadguru Nara-imha Bharati Mahaswami for 13 years receiving best training during the period. He became the greatest of the scholars in the country. As a Paragon of wisdom, adept in Yoga, and a source of universal benevolence to men of all religions—he was acclaimed as an Avatar of Sankara.

In the changing times of the Twentieth century and new dimension of sophistication it is assuming, His Holiness thought that a new movement is called for a dedication to the traditonal moral and spiritual codes of the country. He very much wished for the redescent of Sankara to help us in this great new task. He thought that if Sankara cannot be called back through centuries that passed since his disappearance, there can be a re-collection, of the spirit and message of Sankara emotionally. For this re-collection or revival of the spirit of Sankara, the Acharya felt that a rededication of the place of his birth to Sankara would be a suitable incentive. A shrine to Sankara at his birth place would become a centre of pilgrimage and the spirit of Sankara and his message will once again radiate from the place

Initially His Holiness started the festive observing of Sankara Jayanthi which has since spread to all parts

of the country. It has since become an important Smarta Hindu Festival of the country. His Holiness then made an attempt to redeem the place of birth of Sankara from oblivion—unembower it from the cloud of negligence—and develop it into a centre of Spiritual illumination worthy of the great Master.

The discovery of the ancient Agrahara of Kalady, the site of the house of Sankara's birth, the spot of cremation of his mother's body, is an achievement equal to the unravelling of the Indus Valley mystery, or cracking the 23 symbol meriotic alphabet which developed from hieroglyphics in Kush kingdom of ancient Africa. It was due to a logical approach coupled with intuition. Logic of approach is of course essential in all scholarly endeavours. The discovery has added a new lustre to the life story of Sankara. The initiative of Sir K. Seshadri Ayyar, a former Dewan of the old princely State of Mysore made the discovery possible. The place was soon cleared and Sri Nadukaveri Srinivasa Sastry was deputed by His Holiness successively for some years to celebrate the Sankara Jayanti Festival.

In 1905, His Holiness deputed Sri A. Ramachandra Iyer—a former Chief Justice of Travancore High Court and later a Judge of the Mysore High Court—to the Maharaja of Travancore, Sri Rama Varma (popularly known as Sri Mulam Tirunal). The Maharajah and his Diwan Sri V. P. Madhava Rao readily helped to acquire the property under the provisions of the Act for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments.

The land called Kundakara Paraiyadam Lekkam No. 115, registered in the name of Kaipalli Nambutri and in the possession of Tekke matam was acquired along with other lands in Kalladi Kara Manjappa Proverthy, Kuttanad Taluk, which are associated with Sankaracharya, containing sites which are known as his birth place, the Site where his house stood and the site on which the remains of his mother were cremated.

These lands are situated in the village of Kalady, Manjappa Proverthy, Kuttanad Taluk on the banks of the River Periyar. The local people used to treat it as Sanketham—a place of sanctity. The place where Sankara performed the obsequies of his mother became sacred and people held it in great respect. It was enclosed by a compound wall—near the ghat leading to the Periyar River.

These sites were placed at the disposal of His Holiness by the Maharajah of Travancore with a purse of Ten thousand rupees.

The Maharajah gave another ten thousand rupees to add to the two lakhs of rupees munificently donated by the disciples for the consecration of temples at Kalady.

Two temples soon rose on the site, one for Sri Sankara and another for Sri Saradamba. His Holiness consecrated them on the 21st February 1910 when several thousands of disciples from all over the country gathered to witness the magnificent and soul stirring function.

The river shines like burnished bronze under the full moon. The distant over - looking cocoanut groves look floating dimly through the brightness of the full moon like the dream memories of the history of spiritual thought. The River, the groves, and the temples on the bund form a wonderful tric standing witness over the fast moving generations of man.

The two temples are facing South. The Vimana is stellate, a terraced rising spire cone. The Vimana of Sri Sarada Temple is eight petalled (Ashta Padma) representing Sahasrara—the eight petalled lotus with 125 smaller Petals in each of the eight. There are niches round the Sarada Temple enshrining other Matrika Devis—Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi Mahendri and Chamunda.

The Vimana of the Sankara temple is sixteen petalled. There are murties of Sakti Ganapati, Asvatha Hunuman and Asoka Kartaviryarjuna as protectors of the place. The spot where the body of Aryamba was cremated has been marked by a Bridavan.

Sankara is an Avatar of Dakshinamurti who is the embodiment of knowledge. And Sarada is Brahmi—Brahma Vidya Rupini. Appropriately enough the murti bear Ananda and Jnana Mudras.

On his way to Kalady, for the consecration of the temples, the Acharya halted at Perumbavur on the farther side of the Periyar river. As usual the Acharya performed his ablutions for the day and went into Samadhi when

Aryamba, the mother of Sankara appeared before him in a Vision. She welcomed the Acharya with a smile as though the efforts of the Acharya in making Kalady a new spiritual centre—carried her blessings in full.

The Acharya invoked the grace of Sri Sankara and Sri Saradamba for the well being of the humanity (जगतां हिताय) in the pursuit of Dharma. It is something like the Swamiji calling upon the great shadows, the forces of the past, plunged into moral lethargy—and as if at the sound of the voice they came to life. Perhaps in him they found themselves.

Kalady, the birth place of Sankara, came up again, under dramatic circumstances. The sacred spot came to light through the intuition of a devoted soul—when literature and tradition have counted for comparatively little. Sanctity of a Sacred spot is far more ubiquitous and compelling than ever has been imagined; and it looks allied with history. Kalady came to life again from almost a Scrapheap of history. Kalady the birth place of Sankara is now as much a reality as it is a part of historical tale. It is no longer a sleeping beauty of the fairy tale hidden behind a hedge of thorns. It is now a fine landscape full of natural beauty that came out from tales of history.

Mere words cannot exhaust what is to be conveyed as the capacity of words is limited. These words are to tune the imaginative intuition to the realms of knowledge which is an experience beyond the expression of the words.

PART VI

NEW ILLUMINATION

Life and daily routine in the renacent Kalady are full of spiritual overtones.

On its triumphant return from historical banishment, Kalady grew from strength to strength. It is a kind of spiritual rebirth.

Spiritual Regeneration is a subject which engages all great minds—Social reformers or spiritual Revolutionaries. Every great saint made an attempt to recover and retrieve divinity lost under the odour of sensate human life. An endeavour to recreate a spiritual fellowship and forge bonds of universal oneness has been the key stone of further progress of Kalady.

The new awakening in the country in the early twenties of this Century—made an unmistakable contribution to the field of spiritual activity. The country throbbed with a new life, and unmistakable signs of rebirth were manifested. Many momentous changes began embracing various spheres of life. The life and the thought of the people reflected the spirit of the times. It was an epoch making period as many Social religious and political movements emanated.

The Indian endeavour to reassess and re-assmilate the traditional values of life is stimulating and it is a fascinating experience. It is a profound Panorama of the past but with a promising future to everybody. As

Paul Brunton puts it "India holds an ancient heritage of spiritual thought from its past, which stands unparalleled for profundity and unmatched for width." The Indian culture which is older than any of Babylonian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Greek, or Roman cultures—still stands in an unmatched splendour while the other cultures reached the Scrap-heap of history.

As Prof. Sylvain Levi says "From Persia to the Chinese sea, from the icy region of Siberia to Islands of Jawa and Borneo, from Occasia to Socotra, India has propagated her beliefs, her tales and her civilisation. She has left indelible Prints on the fourth of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has the right to reclaim in universal history, the rank that ignorance refused her for a long time and to hold her place among the great nations summarising and symbolising the spirit of humanity".

The wisdom of the ancient Rishis, the Path-finders of man kind, has to be recollected for adoption to the present times. To awaken a new spirit founded on the wisdom of the ancients, to find a vanguard for the process of rekindling the light of spiritual knowledge, a building of the future spiritual culture must be constructed. The foundations for such a building must be laid deep so that it can serve as the best means for smoothly and speedily bringing about the spiritual renaissance of the country. The clarity objectivity and the fidelity to truth of the Rishies, their goodness and

the beauty of their thoughts have to form the basic values of the new awakening.

To make Kalady the centre of such new inspiration, such a new spiritual awakening and a place radiating benevolence, Sri Jagadguru Chandra Sekhara Bharati Mahaswami made further improvements at Kalady.

The Veda Patasala, Vedanta classes were given new incentives. The officers of the Math, the priests of the temple, teachers and the pupils of the Pathasalas were provided with residential quarters in a new Agrahara built under the orders of His Holiness. A guest house with modern amenities has been constructed. Provision has been made for the celebration of Sankara Jayanti and all other festivals of our religious calendar. A Library was also formed.

Dr. Sir. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the great scholar statesman, was a tower of strength to the institutions at kalady while he was the Dewan of Travancore state. Acquisition of further lands abutting the old nucleus, improvements and renovation of the buildings and temples were some of the contributions while Dr. Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar was the dewan.

As Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India observed 'Kalady is a place of historic importance and it is only in the fitness of things, that, now we are free, every effort is being made to revive its old glory and re-establish the place which it ought to have in our national life'.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission, which became a world missionary organisation due to the inspiration of two Great Advaitins. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and Swami Vivekananda—stepped into Kalady in 1927—to start a centre in the village associated with the memory of the great Advaita Acharya.

The mission centre is now a centre of manifold activities channeled to spread our religious ideas in their true form in every nook and corner of Kerala.

The mission is running a Sanskrit Upper Primary School (where Sanskrit is taught as a compulsory first language in all classes) besides a regular High School.

A Junior Basic School, Gurukulam School a tribal hostel, Ayurveda Vaidya Mandiram, Vivekananda Library, an Agricultural and Industrial section, are other activities of the mission.

Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Mahaswami became the Pontiff of Sringeri Sarada Peetha in 1954. His Holiness is fully acquainted with modern ideas on Education and life. His approach to problems is an integrated effort which keeps a sensitive balance between the old and the new while the growth and value of human personality is always kept in view. In this juxtaposition there is nothing incompatible between modern methods of learning and spiritual culture. Kenneth Bird, a former Editor of Punch, much known by his pen name 'Fougasse'—defined even humour as a sense of proportion.

The new efforts of His Holiness at Kalady read more like a song with a divine music—the song of the perpetual effort to immortalise beauty.

Prof. G. R. Hardy in his delightful book 'A mathematicians apology' observes that a mathematician like a painter or poet is a maker of Patterns—the mathematicians patterns like the Painter's a Poet's must be beautiful; the ideas like the colours or the words must fit together in a harmonious way. Perhaps this analogy applies to Prophets who set the patterns of life in Society. Whatever may be the case of Patterns elsewhere, Sringeri Jagadguru set new patterns of education in the concrete steps he has taken at Kalady. Sri Jagadguru does not believe in Press Conferences and public pronouncements in a big way on spiritual matters. His obiter dicta may not be pleasing to those who believe in Stewardship, but still not alienating. His method of work which is not conscious of publicity—retains a freshness of mind—and is devoid of empty formalities that invaded life everywhere. His methods are however genuinely traditional in tune with the temper of the times. He is always soft and sweet yet keeping the momenteno of tradition very vivid, thus achieving an unusual over all dignity.

Sri Jagadguru started 'Sri Sankara Educational Trust and graciously took control of the Sankara College as was suggested by the Kerala High Court. A Board of Directors was constituted to manage the college. The college stands on a beautiful hill lock with Scenic surrounding.

The college is now full fledged with special emphasis on Sanskrit and Vedanta. The college is the nucleus for Sri Sankara Educational Trust which is planned to grow into a great Research institute of Indology, a new temple of culture, spiritual knowledge and metaphysical studies. A Sankara memorial hall will house a classical library, a gallery of mural paintings, sculptures and culture accessories—and a suitable auditorium. His holiness has rightly observed that it will be open to all lovers of learning, Indians and Foreigners.

His Holiness took the task of rejuvenating many branches of study and administrating schemes in consonance with our cultural heritage in this age of technological advancement and matching human complexities.

A new seat of learning, culture and spiritual activity has taken shape—a fitting memory to the great saint philosopher at the place of his birth—a philosopher who combined faith with Scientific outlook to make the body better, purge the mind, ennoble emotions, enlighten intellect and dynamise spirituality.

The renascent Kalady witnessed the meeting of Sringeri, Dwaraka and Puri Sankaracharyas during the Sankara Jayanthi Celebrations of 1965. This meeting of the Poorva, Paschima and Dakshina Amnaya Peethadhipatis—three of the four established by Sankara Bhagavatpada is historical and unique in more than one respect. This meeting enthused the followers of Sankara.

and made the importance of renascent Kalady significant in the modern world. The common message of benediction jointly issued by the three Jagadgurus—is symbolic of the place, and the vitality and universality of the doctrine preached by the saint Philosopher of the place.

Kalady is now a place of interest to the Scholar, pilgrim and the tourist—a new charming township with all modern attractions, living in peaceful co-existence with the unveiled heritage of the hoary past. It is commonly agreed that culture affects not only man's social evolution but also his physical evolution. What is true of culture is true of spiritual culture because it is a part of it. But spiritual culture challenges put a high premium upon individuals possessing the necessary abilities to respond.

Because the most important setting of spiritual evolution is the human cultural environment—there is every justification to provide a good cultural environment for the future. This is more obvious because, culture is man's past working upon the present to create the future.

Kalady renascent is a living symbol of Philosophia Perennis—the Sanatana Dharma, the abiding and eternal truth of cosmic manifestation and of its divine manifestation which teaches the ever present purity, perfection and freedom of the living creature.

The spirit of Kalady—inspires the culture of the whole life and the integration of the individual with cosmic manifestation. The light of Kalady is Sankara

blazed a new trail in the world of Philosophy, spirituality, mysticism and agnosticism.

Kalady is unique in every way—its physical aspect, the scenic beauty in a wonderland of nature—its historical associations—its spiritual background—having inspired so much of Indian thought—these make Kalady special. It is a great presence in India's history, Philosophy and spiritual culture. Human thought becomes resident in the surroundings in which it is generated.

It is this presence—the existence of a spiritual, philosophical, cultural, and historical halo of light, that makes Kalady a centre of Pilgrimage for eternity. The halo of the place transcends physical realities and to a man of emotional maturity, it grants a rare inner experience establishing a rapport between outward realities and the inner depths.

Strangely enough, there has been of late a growing ecumenical type of spiritual and religions propaganda in India on behalf of different sects of Hinduism. Such automatic type effort in matters of spiritualism—is more a western invention. It is like the brash mastery of marketing techniques in spiritualism—or to be simply described—'impersonality of marketing relations in the field of spirit.'

The battle against the marketing techniques in spiritualism has several levels of meaning. In fact the techniques are sure to fail because there is no uniformity, or standardisation in such matters.

For the followers of Hindu Spiritualism who resemble each other in nothing except in differing from everybody else, to whom variety is as necessary as air, to whom a spiritual life of rules is unthinkable, these marketing techniques would be a horror. The goose stepping ceremony of the missionary marketing technique can never enchain the spirit of the Hindu Spiritualist. Kalady is a Symbol of Hindu Spiritualism.

A study of history is to be purposeful—to strengthen the forces of national integration, if not universal integration. The most important function of history, is perhaps to portray the cultural Social and economic factors of the country which reinforce the oneness of the people of India rather than the Politics of war and dynasties which brought about the ruin. It is not to relate the fortunes ruined by battles, and the chronicles of Kings and their dynastics, but to describe how the people lived from time to time, their cultural patterns, Social values, and spiritual efforts—that a study of history is necessary.

A study of Indian history in such a new way, will reveal the cultural unity of the People of India inspite of several Political Vicissitudes and Periodical upheavals. The history of Kalady is worth-while-because Sankara (who took his birth at Kalady) is the greatest of our integrationlists.

There is not, there never was, there never will be, a city 'like Kalyana, the Capital of the latter Chalukyas;

so says an inscription of a king of that dynasty. Such pride is perhaps more justified in the case of Kalady-the birth place of Sankara-the greatest intellectual of mankind.

Now man goes to Kalady as a kind of thanks offering to Sankara whose single handed services rendered the survival of Hinduism possible to this day. Kalady is prepossessing because there is natural poetry in its syllables.

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Hail, the Seat of delight !

Place of glory bless'd by Sankar's birth

Spot where Blissfulness itself revealed

Fed with moon beams dropping silver dew

And cradled on the waves of Spiced perfume around,

Sourrounded with divine waters of Knowledge

Echoing wisdom of the Rics in the Singing of
Sama,

Under the shade of Yajns, the banner of undecaying
greatness.

Wondrous Beauty, Gift of Nature's bounty,

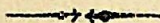
Queen of Piety, Scene of mystic gaiety,

Ocean of glory radiating without wink or sleep

To transcend the power of Night,

Oh ! Kalady ! outward view of Soul's melody.

GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT WORDS



A

Acharya = Preceptor

Advaita = Non dualism

Amalaka = *Phyllanthus emblica*

Apat Sanyasa = Taking to asceticism at the approach of a fatal danger

B

Bhagirathi = River Ganges

Bharadwaja Gotra = The lineage of Rishi Bharadwaja

Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi = A request for alms

Brahmachari = Student following traditional Studies

G

Gurukula = School run according to Indian tradition

H

Himalinga = Sivalinga formed by ice

I

Illam = Household

J

Jayanti = Birth day festivity

K

Kamandalu = A water container made out of kind of fruit

Kudiyatham = Stage drama

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L

Linga = Emblem of Siva

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M

Madhukara Vritti = Living by alms door to door

P

Paratatva = Ultimate reality

Presha = Vedic chanting before Apat Sanyasa

R

Rishis = Gymnasophists

S

Salagramams = Emblem of Vishnu under Worship

Sanatana Dharma = The law of Hinduism

Sisya Purushas = Realised Souls

Soumyamurti = Attractive appearance or idol

U

Upanayana = Thread marriage

Upanishadic = Doctrine of the Vedanta

V

Vamachara = An extreme leftist sect in Sakti worship

Vedanta = School of Philosophy based on concluding chapters of Veda

Vedic = Relating to Veda the Hindu holy Scripture

Vimana = The temple tower

Vrata = Ritual observations

भारत वेद वेदाङ्ग पुस्तकालय
श्रीगणेशाय नमः
आगत क्रमांक..... 1614
दिनांक..... 25/11/80



